

REMARKS

Claims 1-20 are pending. Claims 1-9 are amended with this response. No new matter has been added. Reconsideration of the application in light of the following remarks is respectfully requested.

I. OBJECTION TO CLAIM 1

Claim 1 was objected due to informalities as not being written as that of a method claim. Claims 1-9 have been amended with this response, wherein the informalities have been corrected and no new matter has been added. Claims 1-9 are now believed to be in allowable form, and withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

II. REJECTION OF CLAIMS 1-20 UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over applicants' admitted prior art and U.S. Patent No. 6,468,362 (Chen et al.). Claims 1-9 have been amended to comply with the formalities as previously noted. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested for at least the following reasons.

- i. One of ordinary skill in the art would not have been motivated to modify the admitted prior art in light of Chen et al., since Chen et al. teach a method for rinsing with a wetting agent and drying a wafer for the purpose of reducing water marks, whereas the presently claimed invention does not comprise such a drying of the wafer prior to the second etching step, as recited in claims 1 and 10.*

Claims 1 and 10 are directed to a method for etching a substrate using a wetting agent in a first rinsing of the substrate, with a subsequent second etching of the substrate. As recited in claim 1, a first etching step, a first rinsing step, and a second etching step are consecutively performed, wherein the first rinsing step comprises rinsing the substrate with a first rinsing agent comprising at least one wetting agent. ***The present invention advantageously utilizes the wetting agent of the first rinsing agent to penetrate deep structures, and the wetting agent is not***

necessarily used to clean surfaces, but rather, to aid in a subsequent etching process carried out on the substrate. (See, e.g., page 5, lines 5-12 and lines 18-20).

The surfactant used by Chen et al., on the other hand, is applied to the wafer, is either partially or fully rinsed off the surface, **and then the surface is consequently dried for the purpose of limiting water marks on the surfaces of the hydrophobic wafer.** (See, e.g., Chen et al., col. 3, lines 12-23 and Fig. 1). Thus, the surface is dried prior to any other operation being performed on the wafer. Such a rinsing using surfactants and subsequent drying is commonly known in the art. The present invention, however, does not have a drying step between the first rinsing and second etch, thus advantageously using the wetting agent of the first rinse to aid in the second etch step. Accordingly, one of ordinary skill in the art would not have been motivated to combine the teachings of Chen et al. with Applicants' admitted prior art, since such a combination would also require a drying step between the first and second etching steps. For example, such an additional drying step would disadvantageously increase processing time for the etching of the wafer. Accordingly, claims 1 and 10 are non-obvious over the cited art.

Therefore, claims 1-20 are believed to be allowable over the cited art, and withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.


III. CONCLUSION

The claims currently under consideration are believed to be in condition for allowance.

Should the Examiner feel that a telephone interview would be helpful to facilitate favorable prosecution of the above-identified application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number provided below.

Should any fees be due as a result of the filing of this response, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge the Deposit Account Number 50-1733, MAIKP131US.

Respectfully submitted,
ESCHWEILER & ASSOCIATES, LLC

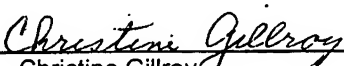
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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING (37 CFR 1.8a)

I hereby certify that this paper (along with any paper referred to as being attached or enclosed) is being deposited with the United States Postal Service on the date shown below with sufficient postage as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop AF, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.

Date: March 2, 2006


Christine Gillroy